CAA HELICOPTER OPERATIONS SAFETY RESEARCH

Fugro is working with the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Chevron North Sea Limited to improve helicopter safety regulations for the offshore industry.

The CAA has identified a number of development areas to help improve the safety of helicopter operations with afloat helidecks and has formulated a new technical specification for helideck monitoring systems (HMS).

In order to trial the new analysis the CAA required an HMS provider to design, engineer and test a real-time helideck monitoring data collection and display system that met the new specification. Trial results would then be used to validate the system’s suitability for incorporation in a new version of the CAA’s publication: Standards for Offshore Helicopter Landing Areas. (Otherwise known as CAP 437).

By selecting Fugro as its HMS partner the CAA will have access to the company’s worldwide offshore systems’ expertise and also benefit from its weather forecasting, reporting and positioning capabilities.

Chevron North Sea Limited agreed to host the new trial system in the vessel Captain FPSO (pictured) operating in the North Sea to facilitate real operational feedback being received.

Rather than build a new system from scratch, Fugro developed an integrated unit using its proven HMS software that incorporates the FPSO’s existing sensors, hardware and cabling. Fugro’s proprietary software architecture has a modular design enabling functions to be easily modified and updated to include new calculations defined by the CAA. Remote connectivity in the HMS enables Fugro to continue to monitor and support the system without the need for costly offshore visits.

Said Dave Howson, the research project manager for the UK CAA’s Safety and Airspace Regulation Group: ‘The CAA was impressed by Fugro’s comprehensive response to the invitation to tender. The range of options provided in the proposal documentation allowed the CAA to tailor the project to meet its needs while minimising costs.’

Pic caption
Fugro is working with the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Chevron North Sea Limited in a drive to improve helideck safety.

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